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# News Release

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 08/22/2014**

## **BACK TO SCHOOL SAFETY TIPS**

### **SCHOOL STARTS – MONDAY, AUGUST 25, 2014**

With the school year quickly approaching, the Frederick County Sheriff's Office offers a few tips to help keep our students safe while traveling to and from school.

#### **Motorists**

Plan ahead and leave early for your morning commute as buses will limit your progress starting this Monday. Motorists should be cautious when children and school buses are in the area. Be prepared to stop, and remain stopped, for school buses. Be on the lookout for children who may cross the road without looking for traffic. Motorists should also allow room for frequent stops that happen during morning picks up and afternoon drop offs. Maryland Law requires that you be at least 20 feet away from the front or rear of a stopped school bus.

Maryland law states that vehicles must come to a complete stop on both sides of the street unless the roadway is a divided highway (median, physical divider or barrier). Motorists who pass the bus before all lights have stopped flashing may face both fines and penalties:

- Drivers who pass school buses while the lights are flashing will receive a citation that carries a maximum fine of \$570 and a 3-point penalty.
- Drivers who stop but then proceed while the lights are flashing will receive a citation that carries a maximum fine of \$570 and a 2-point penalty.
- Under Maryland Law, the school bus driver can be the witness for these violations and report the vehicle information to law enforcement, which can then take action based on the bus driver's observations.

#### **Parents**

Parents make sure your child's path to and from school is a safe route. Because small children are often impulsive and less cautious around traffic, carefully consider whether or not your child is ready to walk to school without adult supervision. Bright colored clothing will make your child more visible to drivers and placing emergency contact information inside your child's backpack/clothing will assist the police in identifying your child quickly if they are lost or injured.

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